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RESEARCH ARTICLE

**A SYSTEMATIC STRUCTURAL APPROACH TO OVERCOMING SELF-EXCLUSION OF PUPILS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The solution to pupil self-exclusion in a school should answer the question, "What tools and methodologies will effectively overcome self-exclusion of pupils?" A proposed approach is aimed at building a complete task structure defining how to deal with self-exclusion of pupils that can be used as an assessment tool for pupil inclusion. Complete task structure is presented by a complete task set and completeness of interconnections between the tasks. The approach is realized by sequence of the steps. At first, the directions leading to the overcoming self-exclusion of pupils are determined. Each direction is characterized by its significance as it concerns its role in attaining inclusion of pupils. Then, the tasks detailing each direction are defined. The complete task structure expressing task performance order is built. The task structure is ordered according to the relative significance of the directions leading to the overcoming of self-exclusion of pupils. Task significance is then calculated. It includes significance of the direction which a task belongs, and structural significance of a task. Further, a real structure of the tasks is formed by reduction of the complete task structure based on conditions of pupil inclusion in a concrete school. At last, the real task structure is compared with the complete task structure through use of a task significance mechanism that allows for the assessment of the state of pupil inclusion in a school.

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**INTRODUCTION**

One of the main problems in education is self-exclusion of pupils. This problem is deeper than education with special needs (O' Donnell, 2014). A school should be suitable to professional work with self-exclusion of pupils through creation of corresponding policy, organizational structure, and mechanism of management. Overcoming self-exclusion of pupils requires successful leadership and management, effective teaching, effective learning, formative assessment for learning, productive self-evaluation of a school (Ainscow, Dyson & Weiner, 2013).

A principal plays a central role in overcoming self-exclusion of pupils. He (she) develops communication with teachers, promotes their empowerment and professional development, provides awareness and willingness in teachers to changes, creates teacher commitments, and guides teachers to review sources of failure or success in work for overcoming self-exclusion of pupils.

Realizing effective teaching and promoting effective learning are teacher commitments. Hence, the role of a teacher in overcoming self-exclusion of pupils is decisive. A teacher should develop relationships with pupils, and contribute empowerment and growth, be aware of pupils' needs, use teaching methods so as to attain learning success of pupils, and take restorative actions towards single pupils, the class, and family.

A teacher should have skills which help coping with self exclusion of pupils. These skills are "treatment" skills, diagnostic skills, pedagogical skills, and skills of creating professional union with parents. The treatment skills (conversation, facilitation, listening, and setting of borders) include creating significant relationships between a teacher and a pupil, between a teacher and a class, and between a teacher and a parent. Diagnostic skills include developing multidimensional vision, ability of analysis of the learning state and the emotional state and social state of pupils. Skills of pedagogy adjusted for the needs of pupils include building individual programs, corrective teaching and management of lessons. Skills for creating professional union with parents include building a professional trust system between a school and parents, visiting a pupil's home, and the ability to conduct professional conversations with parents.

How to overcome self-exclusion of pupils? The systematic structural approach proposed in this paper can serve as a constructive tool for overcoming self-exclusion of pupils. It allows for the creation of proper accountability of principals, teachers, and pupils to provide pupil inclusion.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Different paths leading to the overcoming self-exclusion of pupils are examined.

Reid(2005)affirms the challenges of inclusion are related to the opportunity of learning styles which can promote effective

learning by taking into account the needs of pupils. The author considers diverse learning styles and the influence of the classroom environment and different teaching methods on pupil inclusion. Interrelation of learning styles with the needs of pupils, curriculum development, learning strategies, and classroom management is explored. Mor(2010) proposes an integrative approach to creating an educational environment promoting inclusion of pupils. The approach combines individual and system-wide aspects of teachers' professional growths.

Hawkins (2011) declares that risk of exclusion is caused by pupil teacher relationships, curriculum, organizational structure and social relationships. An approach to the question of pupil inclusion, the conditions for inclusion, an integrated approach to knowledge, different ways and models for attaining inclusion, and formative self assessment are proposed by the book, edited by O' Donnell(2014). Black-Hawkins, Florian& Rose(2007) examine the relationship between inclusion of pupils and their achievements. The authors state that high levels of inclusion can be entirely compatible with high levels of achievement.

A constructive confrontation approach to managing organizational culture is suggested by Essawi& Tilchin (2013).It allows for the coordination of change of organizational cultural values and personal cultural values. Use of the approach for overcoming self-exclusion of pupils can be promising. Deal & Peterson (2009) reveal the importance of relationship quality in learning for everyone with a school culture based on values of collegiality, performance, and improvement.

Rick (2003) proposes creating a school culture that provides sharing of leadership. Owing to that, a principal has an obligation to support teachers and the goals of the school. Teachers have an obligation to teach, pupils to learn, and parents to support learning. Harris &Muijs (2004) affirm that sharing leadership leads to school improvement. The authors describe features of emergent leadership in teachers. Chrispeels (2004) presents the case studies demonstrating how principals and teachers realize shared leadership, how principals encourage teacher growth and development, and how shared leadership leads to higher levels of pupil learning.

According to an approach from Connors & Smith (2011), a school culture promoting inclusion of pupils is formed by consecutive realization of the specific steps directed towards creation of teacher accountability. Bergsteiner (2012) designed a Holistic Accountability Model that can be used for shaping mutual influence and behaviors of teachers in the process of inclusion of pupils. Grimshaw& Baron (2010) propose the conditions of providing accountability: to determine requirements for teacher performance; to create a structure of influence that can provide desired performance; and to coordinate possibilities for effective teaching. Gilbert (2012) reveals that school performance improvement is created by reciprocal accountability of teachers based on peer collaboration.

Frink& Kimosky (2004) note that teachers play different roles in their interdependent work to attain school results. The authors offer using role theory as a framework for creating

result based accountability of teachers. Abu-Hussain, Essawi& Tilchin (2014) have developed an approach to creating result-based accountability in an organization through the forming of an accountability structure and self-assessment of employees. The approach can also provide suitable accountability for teachers in overcoming self-exclusion of pupils. Samuel &Chiche (2004) describe the personal accountability model, determining accountability as action that is consistent with the desired outcomes of a teacher.

Brundrett& Rhodes (2011) affirm that high-quality teaching and learning can be attained by leadership allowing development of a culture of quality through the creation of proper accountability. Jones (2004) suggests adjusting school accountability models from business with a focus on student learning. Abu-Hussain &Tilchin (2014) have built the specific Project-based Collaborative Learning (PBCL) model. The model shapes a process of creating accountability of pupils for learning results. Personal accountabilities of pupils are created on the basis of self-assessments. A collaborative group is formed as a result of the coordination of personal accountabilities of pupils for performance of a determined project task.

The analysis of the above publications shows that the challenges connected to self-exclusion of pupils remain. An approach to building a complete task structure defining what is necessary for pupil inclusion is not suggested. A concept of task significance taking into account specificity of a pupil inclusion process is not presented. A mechanism for the assessment of the state of a pupil inclusion process has not been developed.

### **A Systematic Structural Approach to Overcoming Self-exclusion of Pupils**

#### *Essence of the Approach*

The goal of the suggested approach is to build a complete task structure defining how to overcome self-exclusion of pupils, and use this structure as an assessment tool of self-exclusion of pupils in a school. A systematic approach is expressed by completeness of a structure of tasks which should be performed in a school to overcome of self-exclusion of pupils. Complete task structure is presented by complete set of tasks and complete set of interconnections between the tasks.

The complete task structure is built as follows. The directions leading to overcoming self-exclusion of pupils should be determined. Each direction is determined by its significance (weight) as concerns its role in attaining inclusion of pupils. A direction is then presented through a subset of corresponding tasks. A task set includes the task subsets.

The task structure is a result of the interconnection of tasks expressing task performance order. Thus, the tasks  $z_i$  and  $z_j$  are interconnected, if performance task  $z_i$  is required through prior performance of task  $z_j$ . In other words, the result of performance task  $z_i$  is needed for the performance of task  $z_j$ . The task subsets are put in order according to significance of the corresponding directions; as a result, the task structure is ordered.

The first direction is the most significant. The first task from the first direction does not have preceding tasks. Tasks with the least significance level do not have subsequent tasks. Each task is characterized by its significance in overcoming self-exclusion of pupils; significance of a task is the sum of a direction significance to which a task belongs, and a task's structural significance. Structural significance of a task is the sum of the significances of directions, which descendants of a task belong.

An example of a structure of tasks, the performance of which leads to inclusion of pupils, is represented by Figure 1. The directions, their significances, the interrelated tasks realizing the corresponding directions, and significance of the tasks are shown by Figure 1. The order of task performance is shown with arrows. The performance result of the task  $z_3$  from the fourth direction is the final result of the task structure. Structural significance of the task  $z_1$  from the first direction equals 11, since it has three successors: the tasks  $z_2$ ,  $z_3$  from first direction, significance of which is 4, and  $z_2$  from the second direction, the significance of which is 3. Then the significance of the task  $z_1$  equals 15, since the task corresponds with the direction, significance of which is 4, and its structural significance is 11.

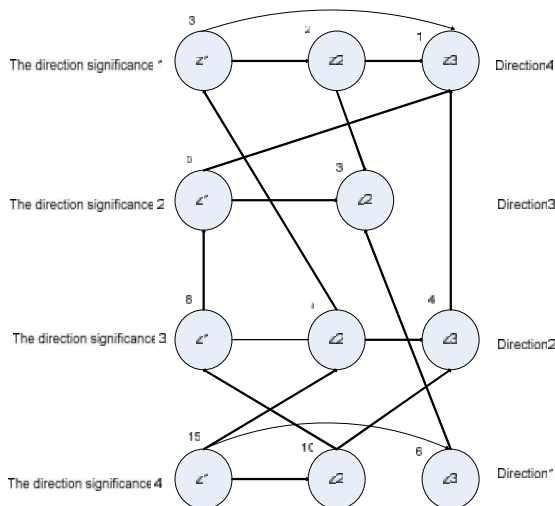


Figure 1 An example of a structure of tasks, the performance of which leads to the overcoming of self-exclusion of pupils

Assessment of the state of self-exclusion of pupils in a school is realized by two steps. At first, reduction of the complete task structure is executed by removal of the tasks which do not function properly in a school and corresponding interconnections between the tasks. As a result of this, a real structure of the tasks is formed. Then, the real task structure is compared with the complete task structure.

### Building a complete structure of the tasks

Building a complete task structure and specifying sequence of the tasks' performance so as to overcome self-exclusion of pupils is based on analysis of the educational process in a school. It allows for the building of a complete task structure as a sequence of next procedures: determining the aggregate of the school activity directions needed to overcome self-exclusion of pupils; evaluation of the significance of each from given directions; establishment of the order of realizing the directions; determination of tasks for each direction; setting interconnection between the tasks inside each direction

and between the directions; determination of task significance.

The sequence of school activity direction leading to the overcoming of self-exclusion of pupils is as follows:

- Inclusive leadership and management
- Inclusive teaching
- Inclusive learning
- Complex assessment of inclusive teaching, learning, and school activity.

Leadership creating an inclusive culture generates and supports a suitable environment in a school. Such an environment induces the teachers and pupils toward productive and qualitative performance of the tasks needed to overcome self-exclusion of pupils. School management sustains and guides pupil inclusion caused by sequential performance of corresponding tasks. Consequently, "inclusive leadership and management" is the most significant direction as it concerns pupil inclusion.

Inclusive teaching encouraged by the leadership provides organization of the required educational process. Hence, significance of inclusive teaching is second after leadership. Inclusive learning is based on inclusive teaching. Inclusive learning follows inclusive teaching. Finally, assessing school activity depends upon the leadership and management, and the assessment of inclusive teaching and inclusive learning is realized by "complex assessment of inclusive teaching, learning, and school activity."

As a result of the evaluation of significance of the various directions, the order of realizing those directions is presented by sequence: "inclusive leadership and management," "inclusive teaching," "as well as "inclusive learning," and "complex assessment of inclusive teaching and learning, and inclusive activity of a school."

Finding and ordering of directions allows for determination of tasks for each direction, as part of the structuring process.

### The tasks for "inclusive leadership and management" are:

- $Z_1$ - Determination of a school vision towards overcoming self-exclusion of pupils
- $Z_2$  -Inspiration of the inclusive educational vision
- $Z_3$ - Building inclusive culture
- $Z_4$  -Creating accountability culture
- $Z_5$  -Sharing leadership with teachers
- $Z_6$ - Forming a school environment providing a balance between competition and collaboration of teachers
- $Z_7$ -Inducing of teachers to develop an inclusive curricula and classroom practices
- $Z_8$  - Rewarding the teachers for productive inclusion of pupils

### The tasks for "inclusive teaching" are:

- $Z_1$ - Taking reciprocal accountability of teachers for overcoming self-exclusion of pupils
- $Z_2$ - Organizing collaboration of teachers for sharing of expertise among them

- Z<sub>3</sub>- Creating inclusive curricula
- Z<sub>4</sub>-Analyzing capabilities, behaviors, and individual differences of pupils
- Z<sub>5</sub>- Providing balance between personalized learning and collaborative learning of pupils by taking into account their capabilities, behaviors and individual differences
- Z<sub>6</sub>- Stimulating participation of pupils in learning through creating possibility for pupils to choose how, where, when and with whom they learn
- Z<sub>7</sub>- Promoting collaboration among pupils
- Z<sub>8</sub>-Developing and implementing inclusive classroom practices through the use of problem-based learning, project-based learning, and technological tools for teaching and learning

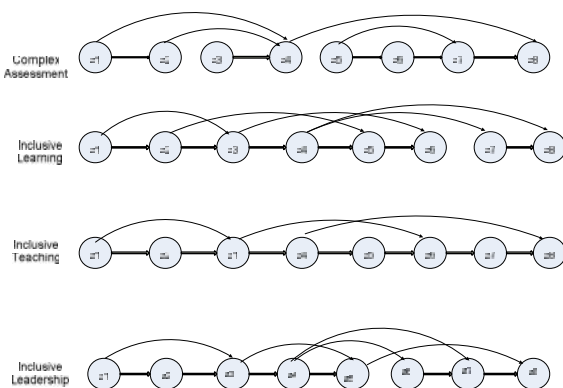
**The tasks for “inclusive learning” are:**

- Z<sub>1</sub>-Taking accountability for pupils’ learning
- Z<sub>2</sub>- Embodiment of emergent leadership of pupils
- Z<sub>3</sub>- Organizing active participation in learning
- Z<sub>4</sub>- Realizing personalized and collaborative learning
- Z<sub>5</sub>- Productive use of technological tools by pupils
- Z<sub>6</sub>-Timely and full informing of teachers about learning problems
- Z<sub>7</sub>- Sharing knowledge and skills among pupils
- Z<sub>8</sub>- Providing feedback about the barriers to inclusion

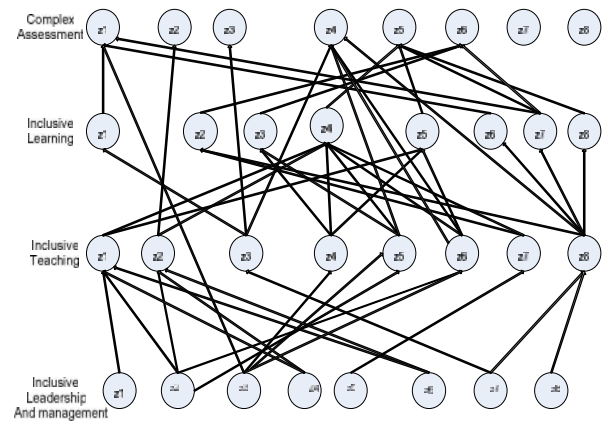
**The tasks for “complex assessment of inclusive teaching, learning, and school activity” are:**

- Z<sub>1</sub>-Assessing interaction of teachers towards inclusion of pupils
- Z<sub>2</sub>-Assessing inclusive culture of a school
- Z<sub>3</sub>- Assessing inclusive curricula and classroom practices
- Z<sub>4</sub>- Complex assessment of inclusive activity of teachers
- Z<sub>5</sub>- Assessing collaborative and leadership skills of pupils
- Z<sub>6</sub>- Assessing knowledge and thinking skills of pupils
- Z<sub>7</sub>-Complex assessment of overcoming self-exclusion of pupils
- Z<sub>8</sub>- Complex assessment of inclusive activity of a school

Setting interconnection between the tasks inside each direction and between directions provides building the complete structure of the tasks. The task interconnections inside each direction are presented by Figure2. The task interconnections between the directions are presented by Figure3.



**Figure 2** The task interconnections inside each direction leading to the overcoming of self-exclusion of pupils



**Figure 3** The task interconnections between the directions leading to the overcoming of self-exclusion of pupils

**Assessing possibility of overcoming self-exclusion of pupils**

Assessing the possibility of overcoming self-exclusion of pupils is aimed at determination of the state of pupil inclusion in a school. It first requires forming a real structure of the tasks.

A real structure of the tasks is a structure built by taking into account a state of pupil inclusion in a certain school. Such a structure has a lower quantity of tasks and connections in contrast with the complete structure.

Forming a real structure of the tasks consists in sequence performance of the procedures: exploration of a complete set of the tasks and the choice from which the tasks would be realized in a concrete school; forming subsets of chosen tasks corresponding with directions of activity toward overcoming self-exclusion of pupils; setting connections between chosen tasks inside of subsets and between them. These connections correspond with the connections between the same tasks in a complete structure.

Assessing the possibility of overcoming self-exclusion of pupils in a school requires determining previous significances of tasks, significance of direction, and significance of the complete structure. Significance of the tasks is determined on the basis of the aforementioned definition by taking into account the task interconnections inside each direction leading to the overcoming of self-exclusion of pupils and between directions. The results are represented by Table1. Determined task significances allow unfolding of the task (tasks) performance in each direction, of which has the most influence on overcoming self-exclusion of pupils. Significance of direction is determined as the sum of significances of the tasks owned by the direction in question. Significance of the complete structure equals the sum of significances of all directions

Assessment of the possibility of overcoming self-exclusion of pupils is realized on the directional level as well as on the structural level. Assessment on the directional level is realized through comparison of the total significance of tasks of some direction of the complete structure with the total significance of tasks of the same direction of the real structure. Thus, the total significance of tasks within the

**Table 1** The task significances for the complete task structure

| The name of directions  | The task number | The task name   | Significance of the tasks (interconnections inside the direction) | Final significance of the tasks (interconnections inside the direction and between the directions) |
|---|-----------------|---|---|--|
| Inclusive leadership and management                                     | Z <sub>1</sub>  | Determination of a school vision towards overcoming self-exclusion of pupils  | 12  | 15   |
|   | Z <sub>2</sub>  | Inspiration of the inclusive educational vision   | 8   | 20   |
|   | Z <sub>3</sub>  | Building inclusive culture  | 12  | 22   |
|   | Z <sub>4</sub>  | Creating accountability culture   | 16  | 22   |
|   | Z <sub>5</sub>  | Sharing leadership with teachers  | 8   | 11   |
|   | Z <sub>6</sub>  | Forming a school environment providing a balance between competition and collaboration of teachers  | 8   | 14   |
|   | Z <sub>7</sub>  | Inducing of teachers to develop an inclusive curricula and the classroom practices  | 8   | 14   |
|   | Z <sub>8</sub>  | Rewarding the teachers for productive inclusion of pupils   | 4   | 7  |
| Inclusive teaching  | Z <sub>1</sub>  | Taking reciprocal accountability of teachers into account for the overcoming self-exclusion of pupils   | 9   | 13   |
|   | Z <sub>2</sub>  | Organizing collaboration of teachers for the sharing of expertise among them  | 6   | 9  |
|   | Z <sub>3</sub>  | Creating inclusive curricula  | 9   | 13   |
|   | Z <sub>4</sub>  | Analyzing capabilities, behaviors, and individual differences of pupils   | 9   | 15   |
|   | Z <sub>5</sub>  | Providing balance between personalized learning and collaborative learning of pupils by taking into account their capabilities, behaviors, and individual differences     | 6   | 11   |
|   | Z <sub>6</sub>  | Stimulating participation of pupils in learning through creating possibility for pupils to choose how, where, when and with whom they learn                               | 6   | 12   |
|   | Z <sub>7</sub>  | Promoting collaboration among pupils  | 6   | 10   |
|   | Z <sub>8</sub>  | Developing and implementing inclusive classroom practices by the use of problem-based learning, project-based learning, and technological tools for teaching and learning | 3   | 15   |
| Inclusive learning  | Z <sub>1</sub>  | Taking accountability for pupils' learning  | 6   | 7  |
|   | Z <sub>2</sub>  | Embodiment of emergent leadership of pupils   | 6   | 7  |
|   | Z <sub>3</sub>  | Organizing active participation in learning   | 6   | 7  |
|   | Z <sub>4</sub>  | Realizing personalized and collaborative learning   | 8   | 9  |
|   | Z <sub>5</sub>  | Productive use of technological tools by pupils   | 4   | 5  |
|   | Z <sub>6</sub>  | Timely and full informing of teachers about learning problems   | 2   | 3  |
|   | Z <sub>7</sub>  | Sharing knowledge and skills among pupils   | 4   | 7  |
|   | Z <sub>8</sub>  | Providing feedback about the barriers to inclusion  | 2   | 3  |
| Complex assessment of inclusive teaching, learning, and school activity | Z <sub>1</sub>  | Assessing interaction of teachers towards inclusion of pupils   | 3   | 3  |
|   | Z <sub>2</sub>  | Assessing the inclusive culture of a school   | 2   | 2  |
|   | Z <sub>3</sub>  | Assessing inclusive curricula and classroom practices   | 2   | 2  |
|   | Z <sub>4</sub>  | Complex assessment of inclusive activity of teachers  | 2   | 2  |
|   | Z <sub>5</sub>  | Assessing collaborative and leadership skills of pupils   | 2   | 2  |
|   | Z <sub>6</sub>  | Assessing knowledge and thinking skills of pupils   | 2   | 2  |
|   | Z <sub>7</sub>  | Complex assessment of the overcoming of self-exclusion of pupils  | 2   | 2  |
|   | Z <sub>8</sub>  | Complex assessment of inclusive activity of a school  | 1   | 1  |
| Significance of the complete task structure                             |                 |   |   | 261  |

direction “inclusive leadership and management” for complete structure according to data from Table1 is equal to 125.

The real structure has only two interconnected tasks z<sub>7</sub> and z<sub>8</sub> corresponding the same direction. Hence, according to data from Table1, the total significance of tasks of this direction of the real structure is equal to 21. Consequently, assessing the state of pupil inclusion characterizing the possibility of overcoming self-exclusion of pupils on the directional level can be carried out. The assessment is received by comparison of the total significance of tasks of the complete structure and the real structure for this direction, equal to 17%.

Assessing the possibility of overcoming self-exclusion of pupils on the structural level is realized by comparison of the total significance of all tasks of the complete structure with the total significance of all tasks of the real structure.

## CONCLUSIONS

A systematic structural approach aimed at overcoming self-exclusion of pupils is presented. Specificity of the approach consists in building a complete structure of the tasks' performance, of which can eliminate self-exclusion of pupils, along with use of the structure for assessment of the state of pupil inclusion of in a school. The task structure is ordered according to relative significance of the action's directions leading to the overcoming of self-exclusion of pupils. Each direction includes the corresponding tasks.

Assessment of the state of pupil inclusion of in a school is realized by a two-step process. At first, reduction of the complete task structure is executed by removal of the tasks which do not perform in a school and the corresponding interconnections between the tasks. As a result, a real structure of the tasks is formed. Then, the real task structure is compared with the complete task structure. Introduced significance of a task taking into account significance of the

action direction which a task belongs and structural significance of a task underlies comparison of the real task structure with the complete task structure, allowing assessment of the state of pupil inclusion in a school.

The proposed approach constitutes the basis for creating proper accountability of a principal, teachers, and pupils to provide pupil inclusion

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